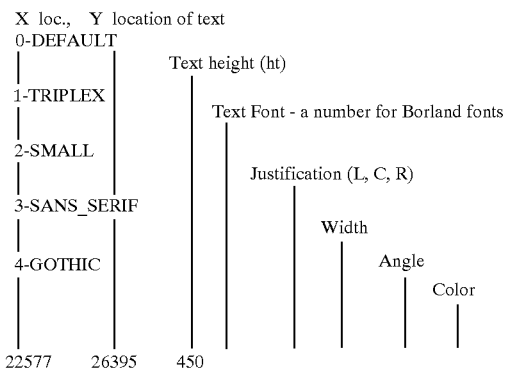
.XY FILE FORMAT



The first 3 fields (x,y,ht) are required, the other fields will default if not defined in the .XY file.

To display a data sheet, the program reads the definition file ("map") one line at a time, calculates a scale factor and positional offsets based on the X1/Y1 and X2/Y2 values listed, and the resolution of the output device. The program then reads and displays the appropriate graphics file (<File>.BID) or text file (<File>.TXT), applying those scale factors and offsets.

After this information is transmitted, vendor's computer **12** automatically logs off and disconnects the data link at block **358**. Customer's computer **18** receives the data files from vendor's computer **12** at block **360**. Customer's computer **18** then automatically disconnects the data link at block **362**.

Customer's computer **18** reads the received variable data at block **364** and integrates the variable data received with the constant data on customer's computer **18** at block **366** according to the map provided by vendor's computer **12**. Customer's computer **18** then builds a data sheet print file at block **368** using the integrated constant data and variable data. Therefore the data sheet includes accurate data having the most recent update included on vendor's computer **12**. At this point, a customer can print a data sheet on printer **24** as illustrated at block **370** or exit back to the main menu at block **372**.

Although the invention has been described in detail with reference to a certain preferred embodiment, variations and modifications exist within the scope and spirit of the invention as described and defined in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for accessing information related to at least one product stored in a main computer from a remote computer, the method comprising the steps of:

storing product data related to a plurality of products in a memory of the main computer;

storing a first subset of product data related to at least one product in a memory of the remote computer;

selecting at least one product at the remote computer, generating a data request query related to the at least one selected product at the remote computer;

storing identification data at the remote computer which was previously generated at and downloaded from a main computer;

transmitting the data request query and the identification data from the remote computer to the main computer;

testing the identification data transmitted from the remote computer to the main computer for validity;

executing the data request query at the main computer to generate a second subset of product data related to the selected product from the data stored in the memory of the main computer if the identification data received from the remote computer is valid; and

transmitting the second subset of product data generated at the main computer to the remote computer.

2. The method of claim **1**, further comprising the step of transmitting a map from the main computer to the remote computer along with the second subset of product data to instruct the remote computer in the integration of the first and second subsets of product data.

3. The method of claim **1** wherein the main computer automatically logs off and disconnects a data link with the remote computer if the identification data test indictes that the identification data is invalid.

4. The method of claim **1**, further comprising the step of automatically establishing a data link between the remote computer and the main computer prior to the step of transmitting the data request query and the identification data from the remote computer to the main computer.

5. A method for detecting pirated copies of a serialized software program located on a remote computer including a remote memory for storing a program, a remote revision level, and a program serial number from a main computer including a main memory for storing the program serial number, the remote revision level corresponding to the program serial number, and a validation code for a remote program corresponding to the serial number, the validation code indicating whether the program stored in the remote memory is valid or invalid, the method comprising the steps of:

transmitting the remote revision level and the program serial number stored in the remote memory from the remote computer to the main computer;

comparing the remote program revision level received from the remote computer to the remote program revision level stored in the main memory corresponding to the program serial number received from the remote computer;

changing the validation code to indicate the serial number is invalid upon detection by the comparing means of a difference between the remote program revision level received from the remote computer and the remote program revision level stored in the memory of the main computer corresponding to the program serial number received from the remote computer;

detecting whether the program stored in the remote memory is valid or invalid based upon the validation code corresponding to the program serial number received from the remote computer; and

denying access to data stored in the memory of the main computer when the program corresponding to the serial number stored in the remote memory is invalid.

6. The method of claim **5**, further comprising the steps of:

storing product data related to a plurality of products in a memory of the main computer;

storing a first subset of product data related to a plurality of products in a memory of the remote computer;

selecting at least one product at the remote computer;

generating a data request query related to the at least one selected product at the remote computer; and

transmitting the data request query from the remote computer to the main computer.